

Parent Facilitation and Family Engagement

Expert Advisory Panel 2: Support to Address the Whole Child Experience

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Introduction

- Schools plan to open in some fashion in the fall. Whatever the model PSB chooses, there will be an array of social and emotional challenges among students of all ages.
- Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions.
- Social distancing can make students feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety.
- Stress during school closings can cause emotions to flare up and may lead to atypical or risky behaviors.
- Although the stress factors may be similar, parents and caregivers should provide grade level specific strategies to help younger students and teens to cope effectively with the new normal.

Summary

Parent and caregiver facilitation by age groups:

Grades K-8

Getting off to a good start:

- Helping parents prepare children for social distancing/masks compliance
- Develop schedule collaboratively
- Set consistent expectations across home & school
- provide reinforcement

Ongoing support:

- Reminders/prompts
- Monthly group meetings with teacher and parents
- Brief conference at start of school year to assess child needs, parent needs, & parent engagement level

Teens

- Having structure with flexibility helps to introduce some predictability in these uncertain times.
- Provide positive feedback. Teen may not want solutions to their problems or strategies for coping with disappointment or loss.
- Engage in an activity or conversation and actively listen and support them. They simply want acknowledgment.
- Better emotional health helps you be more patient and less reactive.
- Help them experience a sense of fulfillment which will help enhance their emotional and cognitive well-being.
- Help them stay electronically connected with friends on social media
- Make them feel a little more useful, and a whole lot more in control of a situation

Parents Facilitation of Social, Emotional and Behavioral Support

Grades K-8

Importance of Parents to Help Children Manage Stress

- Children's biological stress systems are immature, so they depend on parents and teachers to help them manage behavioral and physiological stress
- Some families are under greatly **increased stress** at the same time that school and community **social supports are greatly decreased**
- Parents who are highly stressed or unavailable may be less effective in buffering children from excessive psychological & biological stress



Chronically Elevated Stress Hormones: Outcomes Over Time

Poor Physical Health:

Immune suppression, increased abdominal fat, loss of muscle & bone minerals

Poor Mental Health:

Risk for depression/anxiety

Behavior problems, impulse control

Stress vulnerability & difficulty managing emotions

Poor Academic Outcomes:

Interferes with learning & memory

Risk of school failure

Parent-Focused Solutions to Support Child Mental Health and Stress Management

- **Parent-teacher conference** before or just after school starts to assess (1) child well being and (2) parent engagement level.
 - Teachers and staff provide MORE one-on-one support to students with less parent availability or high family stress
- **Monthly group meetings** by class of teacher, guidance team, and parents to provide social support to PARENTS and partner in coordinating child experience
- **Topic-specific workshops** led by panels or central PSB staff that are then videotaped and made available to all parents
- **Flow chart for parents** - who to contact and what to do about common concerns (school refusal, academic struggles, inattention, depression, etc.)

Parent Facilitation of Re-Entry

- Video message for children returning to in-person or hybrid school: show what a classroom will look like with social distancing & masks, leaving parents outside building, etc.
- Parent tip sheet and checklist: messaging and practice sessions to get ready (e.g. practice wearing masks all day)
- “Reset” of remote learning for remote/hybrid learners - helping parents have a plan for success and tools to address challenges
- For all: parent assessment of child readiness & challenges, to be shared with teacher & guidance staff before school year commences

Parents Facilitation of Social, Emotional and Behavioral Support

- School-family partnerships have been shown to support youth in a variety of domains
- Parents are able to facilitate a supportive, predictable environment amidst return to school with social distancing measures, school closures and hybrid models
- Two important strategies to emphasize in this presentation:
 - a. Developing a schedule collaboratively (allowing for some flexibility)
 - build in reinforcement
 - b. Developing behavioral expectations that are coordinated across settings
 - these should be adaptable and available at home and school

Parents Facilitation of Social, Emotional and Behavioral Support

Elementary Routine Example	Secondary Routine Example
Get Ready to Learn <i>Wake up, get ready for the day, & eat breakfast</i>	Get Ready to Learn <i>Wake up, get ready for the day, & eat breakfast</i>
Morning Check-in <i>Review morning schedule & expectations. Check-in (How are you doing today? Do you have any questions?)</i>	Morning Check-in <i>Together, set schedule & expectations. Check-in (How are you doing today? Do you have any questions?)</i>
Morning Movement* <i>Consider a walk outside, yoga, "hike" inside on the stairs, etc.</i>	Morning Exercise* <i>Choose an exercise activity to do in the home or outdoors</i>
Structured Learning[‡] <i>Establish times for core academic activities, like reading, math, writing</i>	Morning Distance Learning[‡] <i>Support the student in engaging in distance or remote learning activities</i>
Lunch Check-in <i>Eat healthy lunch, review afternoon schedule & expectations. Check-in (How are you doing? Do you have any questions?)</i>	Lunch Check-in <i>Eat healthy lunch, discuss afternoon schedule & expectations. Check-in (How are you doing? Do you have any questions?)</i>
Afternoon Learning Activities <i>Consider a virtual field trip, art, music, science, or other fun learning activity</i>	Afternoon Distance Learning <i>Support the student in re-engaging in distance or remote learning activities</i>
Afternoon Movement <i>Consider a walk, dance party, or similar active movement options</i>	Afternoon Exercise <i>Choose an exercise activity to do in the home or outdoors</i>
Social Connection[§] <i>Connect with family members or friends via social media, phone, etc.</i>	Social Connection[§] <i>Connect with family members or friends via social media, phone, etc.</i>
Evening Family Time & Bedtime <i>Maintain typical evening routines to connect with each other</i>	Evening Family Time & Bedtime <i>Maintain typical evening routines to connect with each other</i>

*Free resources for movement activities: [KidsActivities¹](#), [GoNoodle²](#). [‡]Free resources for structured or distance learning activities: [Khan Academy³](#), [Scholastic⁴](#), [Outschool⁵](#), [PBS Kids⁶](#), [Age of Learning⁷](#), [My PlayHome⁸](#), [Sounding Board⁹](#), [LetterSchool¹⁰](#), [Tales2Go¹¹](#), [Epic¹²](#). [§]Ideas for social connection: Schedule a remote playdate for elementary students, a video call with grandparents to do an art activity together, a virtual dance or music session, etc. (Many secondary students will have better ideas for this than parents will!)

Parents Facilitation of Social, Emotional and Behavioral Support

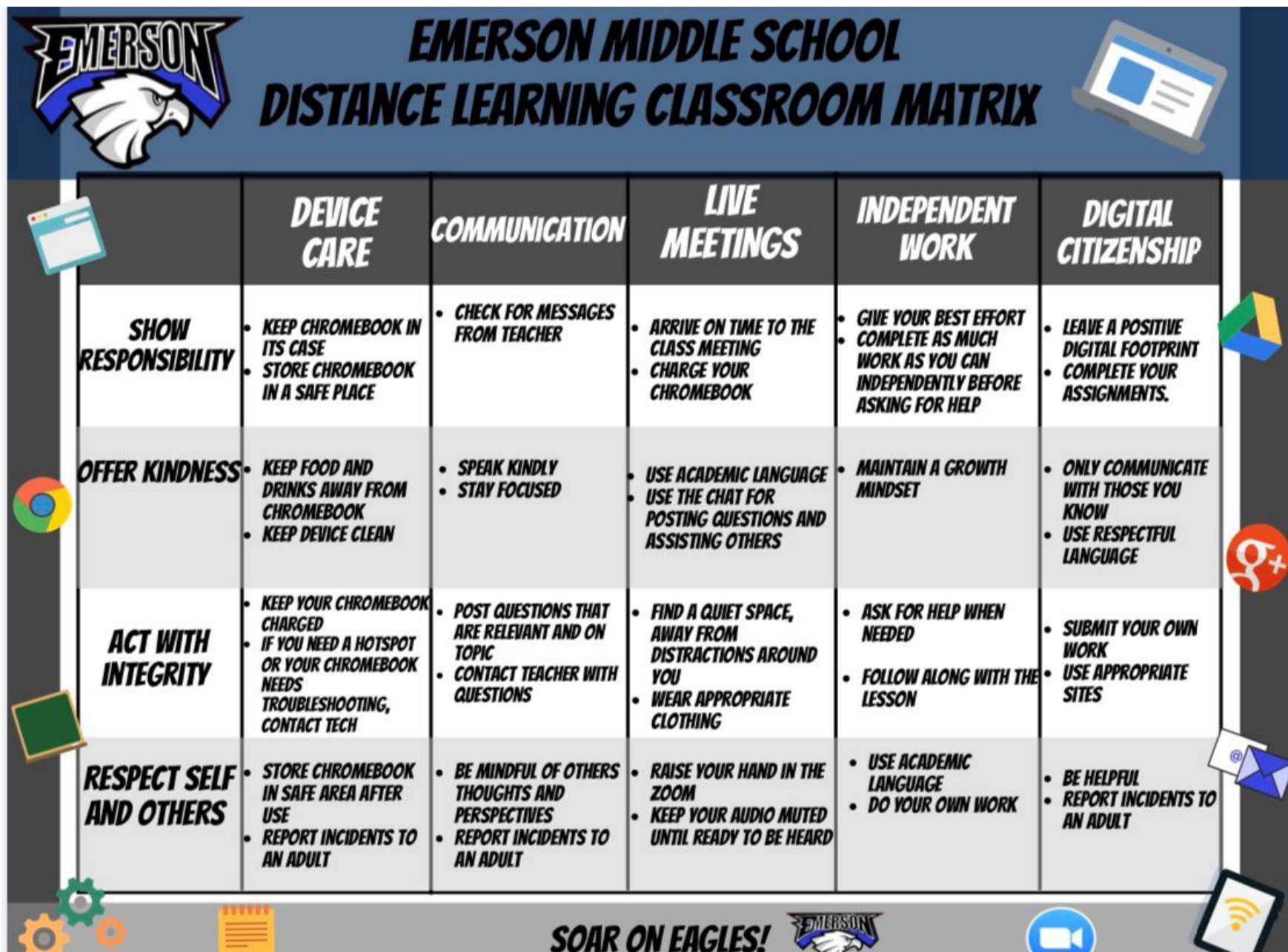
School Example

	Classroom	Cafeteria	Dismissal
Be Respectful	Raise your hand before speaking	Throw your food away when done eating	Listen to teacher instructions
Be Responsible	Turn in your homework when it is due	Bring your lunch money to lunch	Have your backpack ready
Be Safe	Walk when holding scissors	Keep feet on the floor	Walk in the hallways

Home Example

	Virtual Classroom	Mealtime	Bedtime
Be Respectful	Keep background noise to a minimum when engaged in lesson	Be kind to family members during conversation Put your dishes in the sink	Be polite when reminded about bedtime
Be Responsible	Do your best work Turn in your homework when it is due	Wash your hands before helping with meal preparation and/or eating	Go to bed on time
Be Safe	Keep open drink away from computer keyboard	Keep feet on the floor	Wash your hands before brushing your teeth

Parents Facilitation of Social, Emotional and Behavioral Support



EMERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL
DISTANCE LEARNING CLASSROOM MATRIX

	DEVICE CARE	COMMUNICATION	LIVE MEETINGS	INDEPENDENT WORK	DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP
SHOW RESPONSIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KEEP CHROMEBOOK IN ITS CASE STORE CHROMEBOOK IN A SAFE PLACE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CHECK FOR MESSAGES FROM TEACHER 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ARRIVE ON TIME TO THE CLASS MEETING CHARGE YOUR CHROMEBOOK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GIVE YOUR BEST EFFORT COMPLETE AS MUCH WORK AS YOU CAN INDEPENDENTLY BEFORE ASKING FOR HELP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEAVE A POSITIVE DIGITAL FOOTPRINT COMPLETE YOUR ASSIGNMENTS.
OFFER KINDNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KEEP FOOD AND DRINKS AWAY FROM CHROMEBOOK KEEP DEVICE CLEAN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPEAK KINDLY STAY FOCUSED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE USE THE CHAT FOR POSTING QUESTIONS AND ASSISTING OTHERS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAINTAIN A GROWTH MINDSET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ONLY COMMUNICATE WITH THOSE YOU KNOW USE RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE
ACT WITH INTEGRITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KEEP YOUR CHROMEBOOK CHARGED IF YOU NEED A HOTSPOT OR YOUR CHROMEBOOK NEEDS TROUBLESHOOTING, CONTACT TECH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> POST QUESTIONS THAT ARE RELEVANT AND ON TOPIC CONTACT TEACHER WITH QUESTIONS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FIND A QUIET SPACE, AWAY FROM DISTRACTIONS AROUND YOU WEAR APPROPRIATE CLOTHING 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASK FOR HELP WHEN NEEDED FOLLOW ALONG WITH THE LESSON 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SUBMIT YOUR OWN WORK USE APPROPRIATE SITES
RESPECT SELF AND OTHERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STORE CHROMEBOOK IN SAFE AREA AFTER USE REPORT INCIDENTS TO AN ADULT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BE MINDFUL OF OTHERS THOUGHTS AND PERSPECTIVES REPORT INCIDENTS TO AN ADULT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAISE YOUR HAND IN THE ZOOM KEEP YOUR AUDIO MUTED UNTIL READY TO BE HEARD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE DO YOUR OWN WORK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BE HELPFUL REPORT INCIDENTS TO AN ADULT

SOAR ON EAGLES!

Parents Facilitation of Social, Emotional and Behavioral Support

- Implementation (of instruction, interventions) is hard to sustain -- any behavior/systems change is difficult (and can take many years to build fluency)
- One effective strategy to support families is offering prompts or reminders to provide support to the child
 - preprogrammed emails that are automatically sent
 - e.g., remember to log in to Zoom call
- Another effective strategy is to offer brief video training modules (self-paced) or video conferencing to coach families (synchronous)
- Directions to families should be clear and concise; parents should be responsible for the must-dos

K-8 Recommendations: Summary

Improved communication with parents

- video messaging
- automatic reminders/prompts
- clear, concise directions
- parent-teacher conferences at start
- list of who to contact for which concerns

Improved support for parents

- helping develop schedules and set consistent expectations for home & school
- video conference coaching & video training modules
- workshops
- monthly support groups of parents with teachers/staff

Parents Facilitation of Social, Emotional and Behavioral Support

Grades 9-12

Challenges during School Closings: Grades 9-12

Most teens are independent and more protective of information about themselves.

Poor decision-making flares up during times of stress and can lead to atypical and sometimes risky behaviors.

Common Stressors

- Disrupted routine
- Sudden loss of structure
- Sudden unplanned prolonged break with no certain future schedule
- Isolation due to social distancing
- Fear of getting ill
- Lost privacy
- Boredom
- Major disruptions such as missed graduation, proms, athletic competitions, etc.
- Fights and tension between and among family members
- Domestic violence and child abuse
- Worrying about money and access to food
- Fears around distance learning, grades, tests and deadlines for scholarship applications

Behavioral Problems

- Getting into a late-to-bed, late-to-rise schedule
- Substance use/abuse
- Unhealthy eating habits
- Endless cycle of watching Tiktok videos, videogames and snapchats
- Headaches or stomach aches without underlying causes
- Become withdrawn
- Demoralization and depression
- Binge watching streaming services
- Excessive hand washing
- Suicidal thoughts

How to Get Ready for School Openings: Home Care

How to improve your teen's emotional well-being at home:

- Structure to the day: Having structure with flexibility helps to introduce some predictability in these uncertain times.
- Positive feedback: Frequent negative feedback and criticism can negatively affect their developing self-esteem. Annoying behavior may be their way of coping. Teen may not want solutions to their problems or strategies for coping with disappointment or loss; they simply want acknowledgment.
- Quality time together: Engage in an activity or conversation and actively listen and support them.
- Pause and slow down: Better emotional health helps you be more patient and less reactive.
- Creative activities: Help them experience a sense of fulfillment which in turn will help enhance their emotional and cognitive well-being.
- Social connections: Help them stay electronically connected with friends on social media
- Assign tasks: Make them feel a little more useful, and a whole lot more in control of a situation which they are otherwise powerless to change

How to Get Ready for School Openings: PSB

The National Association of School Psychologists publishes the PREPaRE curriculum that outlines the comprehensive steps schools should take from prevention through recovery

- **Develop a long-term recovery plan:**

- PSB must ensure that a multitiered system of support addressing both academic skills and emotional and behavioral health is available to all students and adults in each building.

- **Assess, don't assume:**

- All schools will face challenges, but they won't be the same challenges. Prepare comprehensive universal supports and methods to identify those who require more intensive interventions.
- The assessment process should be ongoing, recognizing that some students (and adults) will seem fine upon return to school only to demonstrate setbacks a few months into recovery.

- **Develop a resource map:**

- Identify gaps in needed services and seek community supports to fill those gaps.
- Recognize that community service providers will be experiencing increased demand and may not be as available as they were before the pandemic.
- Many families may have lost health insurance and will find it difficult to bear the cost of treatment outside of school.

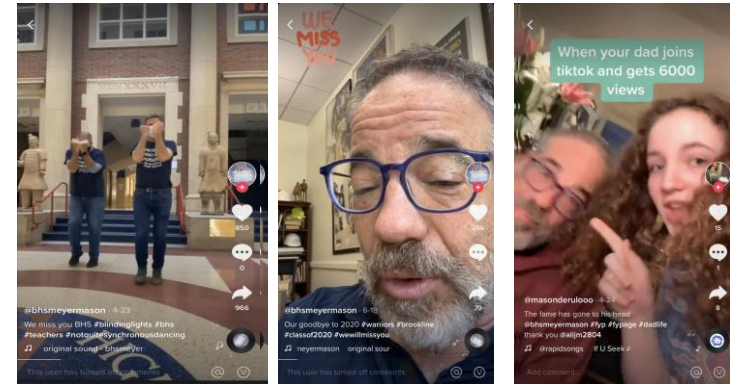
- **Provide professional development and emotional care for adults:**

- Educators will be facing enormous responsibility to recognize signs of anxiety, depression, and trauma in their students.
- They will be managing ongoing challenges in their own families. PSB should provide professional development that teaches trauma-informed practices and a robust protocol for identifying and supporting students in need.
- Consider how to build flexibility and support into the workday so that educators can engage in effective self-care.

Attend to the “New” Basics of Care for Your Teen: Social Media

Teens aren't likely to give up social media. parents can help them stay connected to others with modern technology, within reasonable limits.

- Teens are figuring out how to adjust to a norm that finds them lacking social interaction.
- Teens are learning the responsibility that comes with the power to broadcast to the world via social media.
- Parents can help nurture the positive aspects by accepting how important social media is for teens and helping them find ways for it to add real value to their lives.

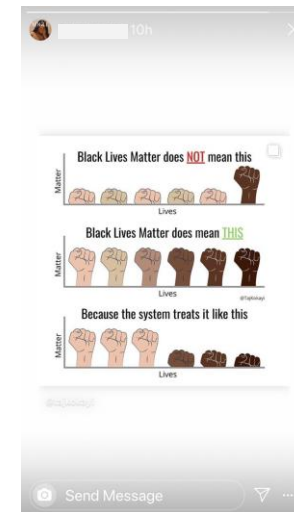


TikTok: offers a tool to share short creative messages and ideas



YouTube: Students used to show various performances and BHS administrators the graduation ceremony.

Twitter: Large social networks expose teens to important issues and people all over the world.



Instagram Stories: Teens are realizing that they have a voice they didn't before.

Understanding Social Media during School Closings

Why teens use social media

- A means of self-expression and a creative outlet
- Talking to friends
- Joining in on group conversations
- Learning about current events and staying up to date with online content
- Meeting new people
- Not having anything to do, or feeling bored
- “FOMO” fear of missing out

Benefits

- Develop better social skills
- Feel less isolated
- Learn about new cultural and societal ideas and issues
- Bond with their friends
- Have fun
- Be creative and share their own ideas with friends
- Be better equipped to be active citizens in society
- Develop real world skills to help them become more independent
- Learn about world events and current affairs outside of their immediate environment.

Risks

- Spending too much time online and being disconnected from the real world
- Being the victim of online bullying
- Damaging online reputation
- Having personal information shared online
- Being harassed or annoyed by someone teens do not want attention from
- Being the victim of an online scam
- Having reduced self-esteem (for some teens).



Action Plans for Grades 9-12

Helpful information and support are available, but are hard to locate.

PSB should take a cue from BHS administrators and B-PEN and assist when PSB involvement is needed.

BHS

- Update the “Play Book” with mental healthcare and social services during Covid-19 for both student and parent sections.
- Simplify guidance newsletters and use social media to distribute most recent information with a link to guidance website.
- Explain clear communication channels at Back-To-School Night (e.g., in advisory period).
- Assist student government in improving peer-to-peer communication.
- Use social media and find creative ways to connect with students and families.

BROOKLINE PARENT EDUCATION NETWORK

B-PEN needs to raise awareness.

- Has been helping parents navigate the social, emotional and developmental challenges affecting Brookline's teens and pre-teens
- Collaborates with the PSB and PTOs to facilitate parent connections with other parents, school and town resources.
- Provides helpful information via written/electronic materials on a wide variety of teen concerns

PSB

Finding information on school counseling and mental health section on PSB website is extremely hard.

- Make a separate side menu bar for “Social Emotional Health” with links to B-PEN.
- Should communicate with school administrators and guidance on how to help middle school families access B-PEN and other resources.
- Should assist school administrators and guidance to define clear communication channels for middle school families.
- Utilize social media to disseminate time appropriate information.
- Assist BHS administrators in emergency cases.